



International
Labour
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In the face of a pandemic: Ensuring Safety and Health at Work

Dr. Manal Azzi
Senior Occupational Safety and Health Specialist
LABADMIN/OSH Branch
GOVERNANCE Department
ILO-Geneva

azzi@ilo.org

SAFETY AND HEALTH AT WORK



▶ **CAN SAVE LIVES**

▶▶ The safety and health of our entire workforce is paramount today. In the face of an infectious disease outbreak, how we protect our workers now clearly dictates how safe our communities are, and how resilient our businesses will be, as this pandemic evolves... It is only by implementing occupational safety and health measures that we can protect the lives of workers, their families and the larger communities, ensure work continuity and economic survival

Guy Ryder, ILO Director-General

▶▶ On World Day for Safety and Health at Work, I call on all countries to assure well-defined, decent and safe working conditions for all health workers

Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director-General

▶ What are the main OSH risks?

Risk of contagion

- ▶ Contact with infectious patients/ clients/ customers/ suppliers/ co-workers
- ▶ Contact with contaminated materials, surfaces & environments
- ▶ PPE not properly used, cleaned or disinfected

OSH risks associated with heavy PPE

- ▶ Heat stress and dehydration
- ▶ Dizziness
- ▶ Physical markings on faces

Psychosocial risks

- ▶ Fear for being infected
- ▶ Job insecurity
- ▶ Lack of appropriate OSH measures, including PPE
- ▶ Isolation & lack of social support
- ▶ Increased workload, long working hours & reduced rest periods
- ▶ Multiple burdens (working duties, household chores, caretakers, home-schooling, etc.)
- ▶ Stigma, violence & harassment
- ▶ Difficulty in maintaining self-care activities (e.g. exercise, good eating habits, rest, etc.)

Ergonomics

- ▶ Manual handling of loads
- ▶ Awkward postures
- ▶ Inadequate facilities & equipment (i.e. when working from home)

Chemicals

Cleaning and disinfection with chemicals become key elements to prevent contagion in all workplace

Quaternary ammonium and **sodium hypochlorite** (frequently used to disinfect against Covid-19) may

- ▶ increase risk of COPD
- ▶ reduce fertility
- ▶ affect asthma symptoms

All workers must be properly trained on the correct and safe use of chemicals and briefed on their risks and exposure levels



▶ **Workplace risk assessment and control** (both for business continuity plans and for return to work plans)

- ▶ Mapping hazards and assessing risks of contagion in relation to all work operations and continuous monitoring
- ▶ Utilizing a participative risk assessment process to ensure input and understanding of affected workers
- ▶ Using planning guidance to identify risk levels in workplace settings and to determine any appropriate control measures
- ▶ Adopt appropriate control measures following the hierarchy of control: Elimination and substitution, engineering controls, administrative measures, PPE
- ▶ Continuous monitoring OSH to ensure that control measures:
 - ▶ reflect the most updated scientific knowledge in relation to the protection from the risk of contagion
 - ▶ are adapted to the specific conditions of each work situation
 - ▶ do not introduce new and unforeseen risks for workers' safety and health (both physical and psychological), including psychosocial risks (e.g. long working hours, reduced rest periods, increased workload and pressure, violence and harassment, etc.), ergonomics, chemical and other risks

All hazards arising from new work processes and arrangements should be identified and the associated risks should be assessed and controlled

▶ Adapting control measures to worker risk levels for exposure and susceptibility

Risk control measures should be adapted to the needs of workers, based on their particular risk levels.

Worker risk of occupational exposure may vary depending on the sectors and tasks performed:

- ▶ Very high exposure risk
- ▶ High exposure risk
- ▶ Medium exposure risk
- ▶ Lower exposure risk (caution)

Susceptibility: Workers have individual risk factors that may make them more susceptible to infection (e.g., older age; presence of chronic medical conditions, including immunocompromising conditions; pregnancy).

Non-occupational risk factors: Non-occupational risk factors at home and in community settings, for example, workers that may be taking care of sick relatives, or be the caretaker for older family members residing in the same home.

► Overview of OSH measures to prevent contagion

- Prioritize physical distance and reduce contacts (considering work-site, rest areas, access/exit, commuting to work, etc.)
- Promote basic infection prevention measures (both workers and workplace hygiene)
- Provide clear communication, information and training
- Promote workers participation
- When necessary, provide adequate PPE and train workers about proper use, maintenance and disposal
- Adopt procedures for prompt identification and isolation of workers with COVID-19 and train workers to implement them

▶ Resources

- ▶ **Press Release:** [Protect workers both now and after lockdowns ease, says ILO](#)
- ▶ **Report:** [In the face of a pandemic: Ensuring Safety and Health at Work](#)
- ▶ **Checklist:** [Prevention and Mitigation of COVID-19 at Work ACTION CHECKLIST](#)
- ▶ **Expert Panel Discussion Webinar Recording:** [Safety and health at work and COVID-19](#)
- ▶ **Think Pieces:** [Original and exclusive think pieces on the OSH response to the Covid-19 pandemic from the global OSH community](#)



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Stop the
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Thank you

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